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INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 000349

SIPDIS

NEA/ARP, NEA/I

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#) [KU](#)

SUBJECT: DIFFERING ACCOUNTS OF AMIR'S MEETING WITH PM MALIKI

REF: BAGHDAD 937

Classified By: Political Counselor Pete O'Donohue for reasons 1.4 b and d

11. (C) Embassy read with interest reftel account of Iraqi FM Zebari's April 4 meeting with Kuwaiti Amir Sabah Al-Ahmed Al Sabah on the margins of the Doha Summit. As noted reftel, Zebari recounted a tense exchange in which Maliki refused to commit to current borders and the Amir responded that, under those circumstances, Kuwait would push to have Iraq remain under Chapter VII indefinitely.

12. (C) The account cited reftel is disturbing, and raises once again the concern that gnaws perpetually at Kuwaiti hearts that Iraq has never really accepted the reality that Kuwait is and always will be a sovereign and separate entity.

At the same time, we note that we have heard varying accounts of the same encounter from counterparts on the Kuwaiti side. Kuwait's official press agency, KUNA, portrayed the meeting, not surprisingly, in a rather positive light. Discussions the Ambassador had following the meeting, with MFA U/S Jarallah and Americas Desk Director Sammak (who were not actually present at the encounter) also presented a rather muted account of the discussion, suggesting that the meeting was generic in nature and that there was not much there in the way of either substance or fireworks. MFA's Arab World Director Al-Mubarak (who was at Doha but was also not present at the subject encounter between the Amir and Maliki) told POLCOUNS on April 7 that he understood that conversation had been "difficult" and that the Amir had told Maliki that Kuwait could not agree to Iraq's plea to the UN that it be released from its Chapter VII obligations and could not agree to dropping Kuwait's debt claims against Iraq, as this was an issue that had been determined by the UNSC. Mubarak stressed that the GOK's constant position on Iraqi debt was that Kuwait has no desire to embarrass Iraq by pressing for payment anytime soon, but, as a legal matter, cannot simply waive it.

13. (C) The bottom line on this encounter, at least from the Kuwaiti side, is that no one except the Amir really knows what was said or what the atmospherics were and he isn't talking, possibly because he does not wish to inflame a dangerous situation. There is much that remains to be clarified.

14. (C) If Maliki was really as belligerent as is indicated in reftel, and overtly rejects the existing borders as demarcated by the UN -- and recognized with a guarantee of inviolability by the Security Council in UNSCR 833 -- Kuwait and Iraq would have a problem on their hands, and so, presumably, would the USG.

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